



AOT in Action

TOURISM WORKS FOR ARIZONA!

Welcome to AOT in Action, your weekly e-newsletter from the Arizona Office of Tourism (AOT).

A Message from the Director:

Good morning.

It was busy last week, and we have some great news to share!

Members of the AOT staff joined other state tourism agencies for the Educational Seminar for Tourism Organizations (ESTO) in Bonita Springs, Florida, August 25 -27. More than 400 participants from state and territory tourism offices and destination marketing organizations across the nation attended this premier learning and knowledge-sharing forum.

AOT staff members attended cutting-edge presentations about new technology, how “storying” is a powerful practice behind destination branding programs, trends in international marketing, building brand value, and other dynamic discussions specific to the needs of our industry.

In addition to learning and networking with our peers, ESTO also showcased and recognized outstanding destination marketing and promotion efforts. We were fortunate to celebrate some of the work our agency has done to bring attention to Arizona.

AOT was awarded the prestigious Mercury Award by Travel Industry Association (TIA) for our innovative and cooperative marketing campaign, *Arizona Origins*. To have our marketing efforts recognized on a national level is an incredible accomplishment. This will only help us to continue to generate interest in our amazing state.

On a more humbling note, I was honored to be named the “2008 State Tourism Director of the Year” by the National Council of State Tourism Directors. Although I consider this a tremendous achievement, I know it would not have been possible without you and your dedication to the Arizona tourism industry.

More details are below in the ***AOT News Flash*** section.

Have a great week.



Margie A. Emmermann
Director
Arizona Office of Tourism

AOT News Flash

AOT Director Honored with 2008 State Tourism Director of the Year Award

Margie A. Emmermann, director of AOT, has been named the “2008 State Tourism Director of the Year” by the National Council of State Tourism Directors (NCSTD), which is a part of the Travel Industry Association (TIA). As one of three finalists, Emmermann was selected by her peers who represent 50 states, the District of Columbia, and the five U.S. territories. She is the first Arizona state tourism director to be honored.

Emmermann was awarded on Tuesday, August 26, at the Educational Seminar for Tourism Organizations (ESTO) Conference in Bonita Springs, Florida. This honor is awarded annually to a tourism director whose leadership has obviously and measurably improved their state or territory's travel and tourism profile. Emmermann was appointed director of AOT in 2003 by Governor Janet Napolitano. Since then, she has unified Arizona's visitor industry and produced outstanding results with her expertise as an exceptional leader and collaborator, among them: A commitment to provide the most accurate and thorough research available in the state; Developing research-based domestic and international campaigns that provide the best return on investment for the state; Being on the leading edge of technology that expands the perception of Arizona and keeps AOT ahead of the competition; Placing a priority on educating rural communities and promoting Native American Tourism.

Under her leadership, the Arizona Office of Tourism has seen increased results year-after-year, including: A record-breaking 35.2 million visitors in 2007 who contributed \$19.3 billion in direct travel expenditures to Arizona's economic vitality, a 31.3 percent increase in direct spending from 2003 and; Generating \$2.7 billion in state, local and federal tax revenues that benefit every Arizona resident.

AOT Receives Prestigious Industry Award

AOT was awarded the prestigious Mercury Award by the Travel Industry Association (TIA) for its innovative and cooperative marketing campaign, *Arizona Origins*. Margie A. Emmermann, director of AOT, accepted the award at the Education Seminar for Tourism Organizations (ESTO) annual conference in Bonita Springs, Florida on August 26.

The Mercury Award is a national awards program that was initiated by the National Council of State Tourism Directors, an industry council of TIA. The program was created to recognize TIA members for excellence and creative accomplishment in state tourism marketing and promotion, and to showcase outstanding work and the continued development of truly imaginative and exciting destination marketing and promotion programs.

Launched in 2007, *Arizona Origins* was developed by AOT in conjunction with the release of the National Geographic Arizona-Sonora Desert Region Geotourism MapGuide, a guide showcasing nearly 85 unique geotourism locations throughout the Sonoran Desert region. The MapGuide was created in partnership with National Geographic and the Mexican State of Sonora. This was the first bi-national MapGuide of its kind. AOT launched *Arizona Origins* to extend Geotourism marketing opportunities beyond the MapGuide and assist Arizona communities in applying the principles of Geotourism to their own marketing activities.

AOT Needs Calendar of Events

AOT is requesting information to be considered for the calendar of events posted at www.ArizonaGuide.com. The calendar is currently updated with events through November 2008, and will soon be adding 2009 information. Events to be considered must be open to the public and of interest to participants or spectators from neighboring communities across Arizona or from out of state. Submissions should include the date, including the year; community in which the event takes place, name of event; venue; venue address; description; admission price, event time; phone number and/or Web site for the public to obtain additional information. Please include your contact information so that we may reach you with any questions we may have prior to posting your event. Photography is encouraged, (images should be a minimum of 300 DPI at 4"x5" original size) and we can supply you with an image information form. Additional events through November 2008 may also be submitted immediately if the event is not posted. Please check the Web site to see if your event is already included. If you have questions or would like an event submission form, please contact Marjorie Magnusson at 602-364-3695, by fax at 602-364-3702 or via e-mail at Mmagnusson@azot.gov.

SAVE the DATE: ATU's Interactive Marketing Workshop

The Arizona Office of Tourism is proud to present Arizona Tourism University's complimentary workshop **Four Key Pieces to the Interactive Marketing Puzzle**.

The "Four Key Pieces to the Interactive Marketing Puzzle" workshop is an informative and in-depth look at four of the most common interactive / online marketing elements: Search, E-mail, Social and Analytics. Building upon the previous Arizona Tourism University workshop, 'How to Develop an Interactive Marketing Strategy,' this year's workshop will expand upon these '4 Keys' giving attendees real-world examples, tips and tools that can be applied to their current interactive marketing campaigns.

Register now by contacting Meghan Dorn at 602-364-3708 or mdorn@azot.gov.

Four Key Pieces to the Interactive Marketing Puzzle will be held from **9:00 a.m. to Noon** in the following locations:

Tuesday, October, 28 – [White Stallion Ranch](#)

Thursday, October 30 – [Lowell Observatory](#)

Neither of these dates work with your schedule? Then take advantage of our new online opportunity!

This year, AOT is proud to introduce ATU On-Line. We will be offering all of our workshops over the Internet in the form of a Webinar. These condensed versions will offer the same great information as the workshops. The inaugural class is **Thursday, November 6**. Be sure to register for the class! Once we have all the “technical” information, we will let you know!

AOT's Research Section has been Updated

The following items have been updated in the Research and Statistics section of AOT's business-to-business Web site www.azot.gov.

- [Gross Sales and Tourism Taxes June 2008](#)
- [Lodging Performance July 2008, 2nd Quarter 2008](#)
- [Lodging Performance July 2008, 2nd Quarter 2008](#) (By County)
- [Airport Passenger Traffic 1st Quarter 2008, April 2008, May 2008, June 2008](#)
- [State Parks Visitation 2nd Quarter 2008, July 2008](#)

For additional information or questions, please contact Beth Billings, Research Specialist, at 602-364-3689 or via e-mail at bbillings@azot.gov.

Hualapai Tribe Pledging Contributions to Help Havasupai Tribe

Hualapai Tourism – which was out of harms way from the flood – is raising funds for the neighboring Havasupai Tribe that was devastated by flood waters over the last few weeks. Starting Labor Day weekend on Saturday, August 30, The Hualapai Tribe will donate 10 percent of proceeds gathered by Hualapai Tourism for the next four weekends (Saturdays and Sundays between August 30 and September 20). The effort will raise thousands of dollars to help support the recovery of the Havasupai Tribe's community. The Hualapai Tribe is encouraging visitors to support the cause by offering an incentive of 10 percent off of any of the Hualapai Tourism products including all Grand Canyon West packages and the Hualapai River Runners whitewater rafting adventures.

Industry News

Critics Fear Air Registry Plan Will Damage U.S. Image

Aviation and business leaders are assailing a Homeland Security plan to require millions of visitors a year to register online at least three days before flying to the U.S. They say it will keep travelers away and damage the U.S. image abroad. A program taking effect Jan. 12 aims to tighten security by giving authorities more time to check for terrorism links and immigration issues among people from 27 friendly nations--including Spain, Great Britain and Italy--before they fly to the U.S. The government now gets such passenger records 30 minutes before flight doors close. The new program will not affect U.S. citizens. It applies to about 14 million foreigners in the Visa Waiver program, which allows residents of certain friendly nations to travel to the U.S. for 90 days or less without a visa.

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the Travel Industry Association and the International Air Transport Association raised objections to the program. The groups want the Jan. 12 start date postponed. (*Page 1A, USA Today*)

Southwest to Eliminate Nearly 200 Flights Early Next Year

Southwest Airlines, which had resisted the kinds of capacity cuts being made by other airlines, will eliminate nearly 200 flights early next year as it struggles with high fuel costs and a

weakening economy. The move raises doubts about the company's publicly stated goal of growing modestly in 2009 despite the airline industry troubles. Now, Southwest will cut 196 flights, including some to Las Vegas, while adding six new ones in its schedule that takes effect Jan. 11. The carrier said that some of the eliminated flights, which span Southwest's nationwide network, could be restored later in 2009. (*Pages D3, Wall Street Journal; 1B, 3B, USA Today; www.LasVegasReview-Journal.com/Business; www.AtlantaJournal-Constitution.com/Business; www.MiamiHerald.com/Business*)

Sheraton Hotels Getting Makeovers

Sheraton, one of the largest hotel chains with more than 400 properties worldwide, is getting an extensive makeover after years of losing customers to competitors. The \$1.7 billion project is aimed at renovating nearly half the hotels in North America by next year with fresher decor, brighter colors and lobbies that beckon guests with new restaurants and cafes. Starwood Hotels, which owns the Sheraton brand, began the project in early 2007 and hopes to complete renovating 86 hotels--out of 204 in North America--in 2009. It's also removing 38 underperforming properties from the chain. (See more hotel news in "Hotel Check-In" later in today's report. (*Page 4B, USA Today*))

Online Travelers Shrinking, Turning to Agents

The number of travelers booking online is down, says eMarketer, but perhaps not for the reason you suspect: economic uncertainties. eMarketer, a digital media research and analysis firm, says US travel sales booked online will reach \$105 billion, up 12 percent from 2007. Furthermore, from 2007 to 2012, sales will increase at an 11.6 percent average annual rate. Even though online travel sales are growing, fewer travelers are booking their trips online. In other words, online travel sites are steering customers back to offline travel agents -- a complete turnaround of what has been happening in the category for the last decade, says the study. Research by PhoCusWright, projecting through 2011, documents how agents are not only here to stay -- but also precisely how important their role will be in a growing travel industry. In the cruise segment, the market research firm predicts, travel agent sales will grow from \$9.6 billion to \$10.9 billion from 2007 through 2011. Agents will continue to sell a majority of all cruises. In hotel/tours, travel agent sales will grow from \$13.3 billion to \$17.2 billion, PhoCusWright says. In car rentals, agent sales will remain stagnant at about \$1.3 billion per year. Only in air will agents see a further decline, eroding to \$9.7 billion by 2011 - even as air travel grows in actual dollars. The drop in airline bookings by agents as a percent of total air dollars is predictable and largely by choice. But the report also projects that while agents will still be dominant in cruise bookings by 2011, their sales as a percent of total cruise dollars could soften. Direct sales by suppliers, the research predicts, could increase. (*Report by David Wilkening, Travel Mole, e-Newsletter*)

Greater Phoenix CVB Earns National Award for Community Service

Congratulations to the Greater Phoenix Convention & Visitors Bureau! The Greater Phoenix CVB efforts to make last year's holiday season a little more enjoyable for U.S. troops stationed in the Middle East earned the organization special recognition from its peers in the travel industry. The Greater Phoenix CVB received a Judges Award for Community Service from the National Council of Destination Organizations at a ceremony Tuesday in Bonita Springs, Florida. The Greater CVB's winning entry was "Operation White Christmas," a charitable drive that collected more than 200,000 golf balls and 16,000 golf clubs for American soldiers serving in Afghanistan and Iraq.

The Greater Phoenix CVB partnered with the Valley Hotel & Resort Association, Troon Golf, Kierland Golf Club at The Westin Kierland Resort & Spa, and the City of Phoenix to organize

and implement Operation White Christmas. Phoenix-based PING golf donated 200 sets of new clubs to the cause, and Packages from Home and Proud Patriots - a pair of nonprofit groups dedicated to delivering mail, care packages and recreational goods to American troops stationed abroad - shipped the haul to military bases in the Middle East.

The annual NCDO Destiny Awards honor local and regional destination marketing organizations that are members of the Travel Industry Association, a non-profit trade organization that represents interests of the \$740 billion U.S. travel industry. The awards were created in 1983 to (1) recognize members for excellence and creative accomplishment in travel marketing and promotion, and (2) foster the development of imaginative and innovative destination marketing promotion programs and activities.

The 2008 NCDO Awards ceremony was held during the Education Seminar for Tourism Organizations (ESTO) conference, an annual education seminar for tourism organizations that are members of TIA.

Glamping – the New Trend in Travel

Glamping, glamour camping is taking the travel trade by storm. While Destination I Dos and Babymoos are carving out their own niche, Glamping too is taking a big piece of the pie. This recent travel trend is for any one who's willing to pay a premium for high class and high adventure, no spouses or babies required, just a single minded attitude and appetite for adventure and for the finer things in life. Rock climbing, river kayaking, archery, remote beach surfing and wilderness gourmet cooking lessons, paired with cocktail making and wine tasting are the new activities glamour campers are enjoying this season at Clayoquot Wilderness Resort, in Victoria BC, a remote, refined and remarkable destination known for its soft touch on the environment, without compromising service for the discriminating traveler. And it is this type of experience the NEO (short for New Economic Order) traveler is willing to pay a premium for, according to Ross Honeywill, an international consumer behaviorist. Recent research has identified over 59 million NEOs in the US and 6 million in Canada, who are looking for bespoke tourism experiences that are remote, authentic, natural, have a distinctive story behind them and allow for active engagement. Research has also shown that if the experience is right, these premium consumers will spend more, more frequently and stay longer than the traditional consumer who is more concerned about guarantees and sourcing out deals while on vacation. *(By Karen Loftus, Travel Mole, e-Newsletter)*